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USA Pledges $125 million to the 1993 UNDP Budget

In a firm show of support for the work of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United States of America has decided to increase its contribution to the organization by 16 per cent — from $107.3 million in 1992 to $125 million in 1993. Altogether, UNDP expects to receive $1.05 billion towards its 1993 budget.

This was announced in New York during a two-day United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities on 3-4 November. Significant increases in contributions were also announced by Austria (10 per cent) and Luxembourg (25 per cent).

UNDP Administrator William H. Draper III expressed his gratitude to Sweden — UNDP's largest donor in 1992 — and other major donors who were unable to announce their pledges for 1993 because of their fiscal timetables. He appealed to them to sustain their 1993 support at least at last year's level.

"I want to single out developing countries, which, despite financial difficulties, have sent a clear signal about the value they attach to UNDP by increasing their pledges over last year," said Mr. Draper.

These include Bhutan, Chile, Fiji, Lesotho, the Maldives, Mongolia, Nigeria, Panama, Romania and Viet Nam which have met or surpassed the Governing Council's growth target of 8 per cent. Bangladesh, Honduras, Hungary and Mauritius have also increased their contributions. Some recipient countries — Belarus, Brunei Darussalam, Ghana, Iran, Mali and the Russian Federation — which did not make contributions to UNDP in 1992 announced that they will do so in 1993.

"Special thanks also go to China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, the Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka and Thailand whose contributions exceed $1 million," said Mr. Draper.

Austria and Germany announced their contributions to CAPACITY 21, a UNDP initiative to help developing countries devise and manage their own sustainable development plans. Japan also voiced its support. "Such gestures, which we greatly appreciate, make clear the importance these countries attach to sustainable development and to increasing the capacity of developing countries to manage growth in an ecologically sound way," said Mr. Draper.

In addition, contributions to the UN Capital Development Fund, the UN Volunteers Programme, and the UN Development Fund for Women are expected to increase.

UNDP brokers fresh talks on Mekong

Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Viet Nam will meet in mid-December in an attempt to revive cooperation on sharing the Mekong River's resources. They will also meet with the donor community to discuss the 1993 work programme of the Mekong Secretariat.

The four countries agreed to meet next month at recent talks held in Hong Kong under the auspices of UNDP. The talks marked the first gathering of the four riparian countries since late last year.

Their annual meeting, scheduled for February 1992, was postponed due to differences of opinion over the legal and structural aspects of the Mekong Committee. Mr. K.G. Singh, Director of UNDP's Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, convened the Hong Kong meeting in order to determine how the four countries wished to proceed with preparation of the 1993 work programme, given the continuing impasse on constitutional matters.

Representatives of the four countries not only met, they jointly requested UNDP to organize a donor consultation meeting to be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 17-18 December. The gathering will be devoted to discussions on basin-wide projects as well as individual country projects.

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Displaced Liberians receive emergency aid

UNDP will provide emergency assistance to 40,000 displaced people in Liberia who have been moving towards the cities of Monrovia and Kakata. This increasing number of uprooted people is due to resumed fighting in the western counties of Cape Mount, Bomi and lower Lofa.

Displaced Liberians have put a severe strain on the food supplies, medical assistance and water and sanitation facilities already provided by the World Food Programme, UNICEF, WHO, UNHCR and national and international non-governmental organizations.

The additional UNDP support will be used for coordinating the on-going relief effort, undertaking an assessment of the needs to be addressed, and logistical support for the rapid deployment of relief supplies and equipment. In addition, transit camp sites will be prepared and stockpiles of key supplies will be arranged at appropriate locations in anticipation of new arrivals of displaced persons.

Boosting human development in Latin America

The Inter-American Development Bank and UNDP will co-sponsor a meeting for young leaders of Latin America and the Caribbean on 2-4 December in Viña del Mar, Chile. The aim will be to promote an exchange of information and experiences among policy-makers, local leaders and scholars of Latin America, the Caribbean and North America in the area of governance and human development.

The 60 participants will identify means for enhancing political participation. They will examine the relationship between strengthening democracy and implementing belt-tightening adjustment policies. In addition, the group will review the impact of income distribution on economic development and democratic participation.

The meeting is being organized in direct response to the political changes generated throughout Latin America over the last decade. Many countries have made concerted moves towards democracy. Yet in some cases, wide income gaps continue to exist. As governments search for mechanisms to allow individuals to become participants in a process that gives them greater access and greater choices, UNDP has responded with a fundamental, long-term analysis through the creation of its *Human Development Reports*. These reports call for the need to ensure that economic growth translates into widespread benefits to individuals. The meeting in Chile will provide material for a book on human development and governance in the region. The volume will be published in April 1993 in conjunction with UNDP's annual *Human Development Report*.

Danish companies briefed on marketing themselves to the UN system

More than 300 Danish companies were familiarized with ways and means to market themselves to the United Nations system at a conference held last month in Denmark. The representatives, from Danish engineering, contracting and consulting firms, were briefed on UN rules and procurement regulations. Representatives of UN organizations learned about new products and services Danish companies can deliver.

"The figures on Danish exports to international organizations for 1991 clearly demonstrate that it is possible for Danish companies to increase their exports to this market," said the Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Uffe Ellemann Jensen. "The total value of Danish exports to projects financed by international organizations in that year amounted to more than 1.3 billion Danish kroner (US $238.5 million)."

The gathering was arranged by UNDP, the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office (IAPSO), and UNICEF. The conference will be followed by an environment seminar for Nordic countries in early 1993 in Denmark. This seminar will serve as a forum for canvassing environmental capacities and technologies which the Nordic countries have to offer.

Searching for new ways to create jobs in seven Asian countries

UNDP will help identify and expand innovative approaches to small-enterprise development and job creation in seven Asian countries: Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan and the Philippines. The project will focus on fostering the informal sector, comprised of a large labour reserve of the rural and urban poor. The long-term aim will be to upgrade and strengthen national capabilities in carrying out poverty alleviation policies and expanding employment.

Not only do the poor have little capital, their poverty also limits their access to credit for the purchase of new seed varieties, fertilizer and tools. Government efforts to supplant traditional money lenders in providing credit for the poor have had only limited success.

Yet there are some achievements. Several countries have explicitly included the informal sector in their development plans. They have promoted handicraft training and other enterprises, engaged in entrepreneurship and business management training, and promoted a variety of credit schemes for the poor. The Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, which offers loans to poor entre-

preneurs, is one example.

UNDP will support the preparation of studies in each of the seven countries. These studies will identify policies for developing skills and promoting small-enterprises. They will be based on ideas provided by the beneficiaries themselves — the poor — and other participants in the informal sector. Each study will be presented at a consultative meeting where the innovative approaches will be turned into concrete proposals.

Approved projects

(all projects subject to modification; sums quoted in US dollars)

Cambodia — The Department of Hydrology has generally given high priority to the development of new irrigation systems in order to increase rice production. UNDP will assist with a country-wide inventory of existing irrigation structures and systems. Based on the gathered data, a list of irrigation structures in need of rehabilitation will be established. Ten to 15 of the most urgent cases will be presented to the donor community for funding.

UNDP contribution: $1,067,620. Funds will be used for a senior irrigation engineer and United Nations Volunteers in irrigation engineering, hydrology, socio-economics and agronomy. A sub-contract for an irrigation study team will also be provided. Executed by the Mekong Secretariat and implemented by the Department of Hydrology. (CMB/92/004)

Cambodia — There is no institution in Cambodia today with the number of scientists required to make major progress in improving rice productivity. The Ministry of Agriculture has accordingly established the Cambodia Rice Research and Development Institute (CARRDI). UNDP will provide training to 1,600 CARRDI researchers, technicians and extension workers in such areas as rice production, statistics and pest management. To ensure a long-term training capacity, 35 Cambodian researchers and technicians will be trained as teachers.

UNDP contribution: $792,250. Funds will be used for equipment, construction of a training centre, an evaluation specialist and a construction specialist. A sub-contract with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) will be provided. Executed by UNDP's Office for Project Services (OPS). Implemented by IRRI in cooperation with OPS. (CMB/92/002)

Chad — This project will strengthen the institutional capabilities of the Ministry of Planning to analyze and coordinate its national economic recovery plan. New management procedures will be introduced and a system of maintaining and updating statistics and economic data will be enhanced.

UNDP contribution: $2,334,975. Funds will be used for computer programming consultants and United Nations Volunteers. Executed by the Government of Chad. Implemented by the Ministry of Planning. (CHD/91/003)

China — Increased waterway transportation of coal is an important means of distributing coal because it is economical and environmentally sound. However, a critical constraint is the shallow water depths of China's harbours, which limit ship size. One solution is the development of shallow draft bulk carriers. UNDP will upgrade the design and testing capabilities of the institutions which construct these coal carriers.

UNDP contribution: $1,500,000. Government cost-sharing: $610,000. Funds will provide international consultants and training. Executed by the China International Centre for Economic and Technical Exchanges with the UN Industrial and Development Organization as cooperating agency. Implemented by the China State Shipbuilding Corporation. (CPR/91/273)

Nepal — Growth of the Nepalese economy could be constrained by shortages of electric power which are predicted over the next decade. One means of improving this situation is to harness abundant water resources. Nepal has undertaken a programme to develop medium and large hydropower projects. One of them is the Kali Gandaki "A" project which entails construction of a 20-metre high dam. UNDP support will provide all technical documentation needed for construction of the dam. Hydraulic models will be devised and an environmental impact assessment will be conducted.

UNDP is contributing $2,000,000 to this project. It will be executed by the Nepal Electricity Authority and implemented by the Asian Development Bank. (NEP/92/001)

Regional projects:

RAS/92/078 — Resource-poor farming communities in Asia will receive assistance to improve their conservation, management and use of natural agricultural resources through this regional project. Emphasis will be placed on watershed management, agro-forestry, plant biotechnology and pest management. National projects in these areas are already underway. This extensive programme will support education, training and research for linking the existing national efforts with a regional programme in Asia. Technical information and expertise will be shared between

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existing institutions and non-governmental organizations.

UNDP contribution: $12,188,000. Funds will be used for formulating the programme and organizing donor consultations. Executed by UNDP's Office for Project Services. Implemented by relevant ministries and departments in each Asian country.

Global projects:

GLO/91/G32 — This project has been formulated to respond to the critical need for accurate data on greenhouse gases which cause global warming. Equipment and instruments will be provided and sites will be chosen to establish seven new stations for gathering data on greenhouse and other atmospheric gases. Training will be provided to the stations' scientific personnel in such areas as atmospheric chemistry and physics, sample analysis, and operation and calibration of instruments.

Global Environment Facility contribution: $4.8 million. Funds will be used for training, and consultants to help with the installation, calibration and operation of equipment. Executed by the World Meteorological Organization.

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